

Bridgnorth R.D.B.



RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL.

Medical Officer's Annual Report.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,—I present to you my annual report for the year 1925.

NATURAL AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS OF THE AREA.

The AREA is 70,717 acres in extent. POPULATION.—At the census of 1921 this was 8,570 and the estimated population in 1925 was 8,529.

PHYSICAL FEATURES and general character of the area. Bridgnorth Rural District is an agricultural area surrounding the Borough of Bridgnorth and is roughly divided by the River Severn which runs through it from North to South. On the West side the country is hilly and includes part of the Brown Clea Hill which rises to 1,805 feet above sea level. There is here a stone quarry and connected with it a cement works. The country is well watered. On the East side of the River Severn the country is flatter. It is also well watered, the principal stream being the River Worfe which enters the Severn about one mile above Bridgnorth. The three most populous parishes lie on this side. There are 27 parishes in the area.

The number of inhabited houses in the area at the census 1921 was 2,026
The number of families or separate occupiers at the census 1921 was 2,051
The rateable value is £44,877
The sum represented by a penny rate is £180

SOCIAL CONDITIONS.
The district is almost entirely concerned with agriculture, but there is a stone quarry at Ditton Priors and a considerable number of coal-miners live in the district, mainly in Chelmarsh, and work in the adjacent collieries at Highley and Kinet. There are 65 coal miners per 1,000 males in the district. The coal mine at Billingsley is now closed.

The district is, on the whole, thinly populated having only 0.1 persons per acre.

VITAL STATISTICS.

	Male	Female	Total
Births	78	80	158
Legitimate	73	77	150
Illegitimate	5	3	8

The Birth rate was per 1,000 of population 18.52.

	Male	Female	Total
Deaths	57	50	107

The Death rate per 1,000 population was 12.54.

No women died in or in consequence of child birth.

The number of deaths of infants under one year of age, per 1,000 births, were:—

	Legitimate	Illegitimate	Total
86.6	125.0	88.4	

Deaths from Measles None.

Deaths from Whooping Cough 1

Deaths from Diarrhoea None.

(under 2 years of age).

HOSPITALS.

There are no hospitals in the district. Patients requiring hospital treatment are sent to Bridgnorth or neighbouring towns, e.g., Shrewsbury, Wolverhampton, Kidderminster, etc.

There is no Isolation Hospital in the district and infectious cases are treated at their own homes.

There has been no noteworthy cause of sickness during the five years and the conditions of occupation are not prejudicial to health.

GENERAL PROVISION OF HEALTH SERVICES IN THE AREA.

Hospitals provided or subsidized by the Local Authority or County Council.

(1) TUBERCULOSIS.—There is no hospital in the area but suitable cases of Pulmonary Tuberculosis are treated in the Sanatorium at Shirelock and other forms of Tuberculosis at the Shropshire Orthopaedic Hospital at Oswestry.

(2) MATERNITY.—Cases are treated at home or in hospitals in adjacent areas.

(3) CHILDREN.—There is no children's hospital in the area.

(4) FEVER.—There is no Isolation Hospital in the area or arrangement with any adjacent area for treatment of cases of infectious disease. Cases are isolated in their homes, but in suitable cases this has been done by means of tents.

(5) SMALLPOX.—Isolation of cases of smallpox will be undertaken by the County Authorities if they arise.

There is no institutional provision for unmarried mothers, illegitimate infants or homeless children other than the Bridgnorth Union Workhouse.

AMBULANCE FACILITIES.

There is a Red Cross Ambulance in Bridgnorth which is available for conveyance of cases of accident or illness.

CLINICS AND TREATMENT CENTRES.

There is a Welfare Centre in Bridgnorth which is also used as a centre for the Shropshire Orthopaedic Hospital and as a Tuberculosis Centre. The professional services at the Centre are provided by the County Council which also contributes to the upkeep.

PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICERS of the Local Authority. There is one Sanitary Inspector who is a whole time official. The Medical Officer of Health is a part time officer.

PROFESSIONAL NURSING IN THE HOME.—There are district nurses working in the following districts:—Alveley, Billingsley, Burwarton, Claverley, Cleobury North, Deuxhill, Oldbury, Sidbury, Worfield and part of Astley Abbots. During epidemics of Measles, etc., a nurse is available on application to the County Medical Officer of Health.

MIDWIVES.

There is no subsidy to midwives by the Local

Authority

CHEMICAL WORKS.

LEGISLATION IN FORCE.—There are no bye-laws in force in the area.

SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE AREA.

WATER.—The majority of houses in the area are supplied with water from public or private wells and springs. In the village of Alveley and Worfield there are stand pipes for the supply of water which is pumped up from springs. There are also partial supplies of water from springs in the villages of Monkhop ton, Cleobury North and Ditton Priors. In Oldbury a few houses are supplied with water from the Bridgnorth Waterworks, in addition to their own supplies of drinking water. The water from springs and wells in the area is on the whole of good quality and it is only in exceptionally dry seasons that there is any shortage of water.

RIVERS AND STREAMS.—There is no notable pollution of rivers and streams in the area.

DRAINAGE AND SEWERAGE.—Sewage in Worfield is carried in pipes for some distance below the village and enters the River Worfe. In general sewage is treated locally by drainage on to the land.

CLOSET ACCOMMODATIONS.—Pail closets and cess-pits are largely in use throughout the district. A few are converted to earth closets each year.

SCAVENGING.—There is no public scavenging. Refuse is disposed of on the land.

SANITARY INSPECTOR OF THE AREA.—A report by the Sanitary Inspector is appended.

SCHOOLS.—The sanitary condition and water supply of the schools is, on the whole, fair.

Fewer schools have been closed on account of infectious disease in accordance with the Memorandum on Closure of Schools.

HOUSING.

I. GENERAL HOUSING CONDITIONS IN THE AREA.

1. GENERAL HOUSING CONDITIONS.—This is essentially a rural area, one half of the male population being engaged in agriculture, although there are only 233 workers in agriculture per 10,000 acres. It is therefore natural that there are few large villages and that labourers' dwellings are largely isolated. The majority are old buildings of brick or sandstone but in the neighbourhood of the Clea Hill there are many of stone and some modern dwellings of concrete. Nearly half of the occupied houses are 3-4 room cottages and over 65 per cent are 3-5 room dwellings.

(2a) EXTENT OF SHORTAGE OF HOUSES.—At the census of 1921 there was a shortage of 25 houses, the number of separate dwellings being 2026. As the population is a falling one and 11 new houses have been erected, while three have been closed in the last five years, this shortage should have been reduced.

(2b) No special measures have been taken or are contemplated to meet this shortage.

(3) CHANGES IN POPULATION.—There is a decrease which is mainly due to migration. During the period 1911–1921 there was a loss of 1,215 persons by migration which was only partly balanced by a gain of 652 by excess of births over deaths in the same period. The decrease is likely to continue as no new industries have been started in the area and the birth rate continues to fall.

II. OVERCROWDING.

(1) EXTENT.—There is some overcrowding but not to a serious extent. About 66 per cent. of the families live in 3-5 room dwellings and the average size of families is 4.1 persons. The average of rooms per person is 1.30 which is slightly above the average of the combined Rural Districts of Shropshire. The number of rooms per person varies greatly in different parishes, being 1.00 in Ditton Priors and 2.73 in Eardington.

(2) CAUSES.—Few new houses have been erected in the last ten years and the social condition of the agricultural labourer has not improved.

(3) No special measures have been taken or are contemplated for dealing with overcrowding.

(4) There have been no unusual cases of overcrowding during the year.

III.—FITNESS OF HOUSES.

(1a). General standard of housing in the area. There are a number of working-class dwellings which, though not unfit for habitation are old and difficult to keep in repair.

(1b) General character of defects found to exist in unfit houses. These are mainly due to dilapidation and decay.

(1c) There have been some cases where defects were due to want of management and supervision and it is usual to find careless tenants in these houses.

(2) General action taken as regards unfit houses under:—

(a) The Public Health Acts.—There has been no general action.

(b) The Housing Acts. There have been no closing orders in 1925.

(3) Difficulties in remedying unfit houses. Owners have generally been willing to carry out necessary repairs and no special measures have had to be taken. No back to back houses have had to be dealt with.

(4) Water supply of houses is chiefly by private wells and springs and only in a few instances is there a public or common supply for parts of villages.

Two privies have been connected to earth closets during the year.

Refuse is disposed of on the land by the tenants.

IV.—UNHEALTHY AREAS.

There has been no complaint of or representation as to an unhealthy area.

V.—BYE-LAWS relating to houses, houses let in lodgings, tents, vans, sheds, etc. There are none.

Table of Housing Statistics for the year 1925 appended here:—

GENERAL STATISTICS.

Area (acres)	70,717
Population (Census 1921, and estimated 1925)	8,570
No. of inhabited houses (1921)	2,026
No. of families or separate occupiers (1921)	2,051
Rateable value	£44,877
Sum represented by a penny rate	£180

HOUSING.

Number of new houses erected during the year:—

(a) Total (including numbers given separately under (b)	None
(b) With State assistance under the Housing Acts:—	
(i) By the Local Authority	None
(ii) By other bodies or persons	None

1.—UNFIT DWELLING HOUSES.

Inspection.—(1) Total number of dwelling houses inspected for housing defects (under Public Health or Housing Acts)

(2) Number of dwelling houses which were inspected and recorded under the Housing (Inspection of District) Regulations 1910, or the Housing Consolidated Regulations, 1925

(3) Number of dwelling houses found to be in a state so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation

(4) Number of dwelling houses (exclusive of those referred to under the preceding sub-head) found not to be in all respects reasonably fit for human habitation

2.—REMEDY OF DEFECTS WITHOUT SERVICE OF FORMAL NOTICES.

Number of defective dwelling houses rendered fit in consequence of informal action by the Local Authority or their Officers

3.—ACTION UNDER STATUTORY POWERS.

A.—Proceedings under section 3 of the Housing Act, 1925.

(1) Number of dwelling houses in respect of which notices were served requiring repairs

(2) Number of dwelling houses which were rendered fit after service of formal notices

(a) By Owners

(b) By Local Authority in default of Owners

(3) Number of dwelling houses in respect of which Closing Orders became operative in pursuance of declarations by owners of intention to close

B.—Proceedings under the Public Health Acts.

(1) Number of dwelling houses in respect of which notices were served requiring defects to be remedied

(2) Number of dwelling houses in which defects were remedied after service of formal notices:—

(a) By Owners

(b) By Local Authority in default of Owners

C.—Proceedings under Sections 11, 14 and 15 of the Housing Act, 1925.

(1) Number of representations made with a view to the making of Closing Orders

(2) Number of dwelling houses in respect of which Closing Orders were made

(2) Number of dwelling houses in respect of which Closing Orders were determined, the dwelling houses have been rendered fit

(4) Number of dwelling houses in respect of which Demolition Orders were made

(5) Number of dwelling houses demolished in pursuance of Demolition Orders

INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD.

A.—MILK SUPPLY.

The milk produced within the area is on the whole of good quality. As this is a rural area very little milk is brought into the area. The collection and dispatch of milk to large towns occasionally makes it difficult for poorer families in the district to obtain adequate supplies of milk.

(i) No action has been taken as to Tuberculosis Milk and Tuberculous Cattle.

(ii) Number of licenses granted for the sale of milk under special designation

(iii) Refusal or revocation of registration of retailers or of licenses for graded milk

(iv) There have been no bacteriological examinations of milk.

B.—MEAT.

(i) Inspection at the time of slaughter is carried out by the Sanitary Inspector. As the area is entirely rural and of considerable extent it is impossible with his present means of transport to do this adequately.

(i) The Public Health (Meat) Regulations, 1924, are fairly well carried out.

(iii) There are no Public Slaughter Houses.

PRIVATE SLAUGHTERHOUSES

	In 1920	January 1925	December 1925
Registered	5	8	8
Licensed	0	0	0
Total	5	8	8

C.—OTHER FOODS.

The bakehouses in the district are regularly inspected and are well kept.

D.—There have been no cases of food poisoning reported in the area.

E.—SALE OF FOOD AND DRUGS ACTS.—No action has been taken.

PREVALENCE OF, AND CONTROL OVER, INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

Infectious diseases generally.

In 1921 there was a small epidemic of Diphtheria but for the last two years the area has been practically free of Diphtheria.

There was a small epidemic of Scarlet Fever in 1921 and scattered cases followed throughout 1922 but few cases have been reported in the last three years.

There have been three cases of Encephalitis Lethargica notified in the last three years, one of them being fatal.

It is doubtful if all cases of Pneumonia are notified.

Examination of pathological and bacteriological specimens is undertaken by Birmingham University Laboratories and these facilities are well used. No use has been made of the Schick or Dick tests.

No vaccinations have been performed under the Public Health (Smallpox Prevention) Regulations 1917.

NOTIFIABLE DISEASES (OTHER THAN TUBERCULOSIS) DURING THE YEAR 1925.

Disease.	Total Cases notified.		Total Cases admitted to Hospital.		Total Deaths.	
	Notified.	Admitted.	Notified.	Admitted.	Notified.	Admitted.
Smallpox	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Scarlet Fever	8	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Diphtheria	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Enteric Fever	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Puerperal Fever	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Pneumonia	1	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Erysipelas	2	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Encephalitis	3	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Lethargia	1	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil

TUBERCULOSIS.

New Cases and Mortality during 1925.

Age Period.	New Cases.		Deaths.	
	M.	F.	M.	F.
0	0	0	0	0
1	0	0	0	0
5	0	0	0	0
10	0	0	0	0
15	1	1	1	1
20	1	1	1	1
25	1	1	1	1
35	0	0	0	0
45	0	0	0	0
55	0	0	0	0
65 & up	0	0	0	0
Totals	2	2	2	2

No action has been taken under the Public Health (Prevention of Tuberculosis) Regulations, 1925.

There have been no cases of Puerperal Fever or Ophthalmia Neonatorum during the year.

I am gentlemen, your obedient servant,

L. E. DICKSON,

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH.

24th September, 1926.

Account of Sanitary Work for year ending 31st December, 1925.

Number of houses inspected during the above period either in connection with outbreaks of infectious disease or in consequence of complaints or in the course of a systematic sanitary survey

Number of legal notices sent

Number of informal notices sent

Number of such notices complied with

Particulars of Sanitary matters referred to in the above notices.

(a) Houses to be disinfected after Infectious disease

(b) Deficient or objectionable water supply

(c) New drains to be constructed or old ones amended

(d) New closets to be provided or old ones amended in construction

(e) Houses damp or dirty or admitting rain or weather or otherwise in a bad sanitary condition

(f) Offensive accumulations of all kinds

(g) Animals so kept as to be a nuisance

Houses disinfected after infectious disease, other than Phthisis

Houses disinfected in cases of Phthisis

Privies converted into earth closets

Repairs to public pumps and wells

Private wells reconstructed or improved

Inspection of Dairies, Cowsheds and Milkshops for year ending 31st December, 1926.

Number of Cowsheds and Milkshops on register

Number of Retailers on register

Number of Inspections

Defects found

Number of notices verbal and written

Number of these complied with

Number of Slaughterhouses on register

Number of inspections made

Number of defects found

Number of defects remedied

Inspections of Workshops and Workplaces.

Number of Workshops and Bakehouses on register

Number of inspections made

Number of notices written and verbal


Number complied with

I am, Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

your obedient servant,

DAVID C. YOUNGER,

SANITARY INSPECTOR.



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